

## **WISCONSIN EPI EXPRESS**

**October 3, 2003**

[Wisconsin Department of Health & Family Services](#)  
Division of Public Health  
Bureau of Communicable Diseases

"Surveillance provides information for action." [World Health Organization](#)

*The WISCONSIN EPI EXPRESS provides a regular update on communicable disease issues of importance in our state and is intended primarily for participants in the public health surveillance system. Please let us know if the topics covered are on target or if there are others that we should be addressing. Thank you. Herb Bostrom: [bostrhh@dhfs.state.wi.us](mailto:bostrhh@dhfs.state.wi.us)*

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### **1. TB Elimination by 2010?**

**Now** is the Time; **Wisconsin** is the Place; **YOU** are the Catalyst

Save the date for the Wisconsin TB Program **WisLine Web Conference TB Update**. This informative training session will be presented twice, on **Monday, December 8<sup>th</sup>, 10:30 AM to 12:30 PM** and **Wednesday, December 10<sup>th</sup>, 12:30 to 2:30 PM** to give flexibility for fitting it into your work day. The content will be the same on both days; audience questions and answers will differ.

**You must register on-line at** [http://www1.uwex.edu/ics/wlwreg/wlw\\_welcome.cfm](http://www1.uwex.edu/ics/wlwreg/wlw_welcome.cfm)

If you have registered before for a WisLine Web Conference, register as a "Returning Registrant" using your login/password. If this will be your first WisLine Web Conference, register as a "New registrant." There are no fees. This education session is sponsored and presented by the Wisconsin TB Program. Registration deadline is Thursday, December 4<sup>th</sup>, 2003

The content of this offering is primarily directed to local health department staff, but many community providers will benefit from this update. For instance, the new form for getting TB medications from the state will be of primary interest to staff of physician offices and clinics and for nurse practitioners. The guideline on sputum specimens will be very meaningful for hospital staff, especially Infection Control Practitioners (ICPs). Consider inviting any other persons in the provider community who may be involved when a person is identified with TB infection or disease in your community. The challenge of TB elimination will require extensive collaboration between public health and health care providers.

Some of the main topics to be discussed are:

- **The NEW 2003 American Thoracic Society/CDC guideline for the treatment of active TB Disease**  
(Including review of frequently asked questions about the treatment guideline)

- The **NEW Initial Request for TB Medication Form** (DPH 4000) & correct approval methods for "state meds"
- The **NEW Guideline - ENSURING PROMPT, ACCURATE SPUTUM TESTING**
- The restriction criteria for the use of the Rifampin-Pyrazinamide (**RIF-PZA**) treatment regimen
- The **NEW TB Resources 2003 document** - What your library should have; what you can throw away
- How to order a free, **CDC CD-ROM** - for those who have asked for "everything in one place" - its here!
- Review of the process and forms for **Interjurisdictional Referral**
- Questions and answers will be taken and other timely TB topics will be discussed as time allows

Participants are asked to make local arrangements to join together in offices or conference rooms in your area, **one connection per location**. A separate phone line, speakerphone and a computer with an Internet connection are essential for participation. The conference ID number and dialing instructions are given when you do the online registration.

Participants will need to bring:

1. A copy of the large packet of materials sent to each health department in October
2. A copy of the additional handouts for the WisLine Web Conference. They will be posted on the HAN and will be sent to each health officer via an e-mail attachment in late November or early December.

Questions about the WisLine Web Conference can be answered by calling the WI TB Program at 608-266-9692.

## 2. HIPAA and TB Medications

Although public health is exempt from many HIPAA regulations, the pharmacies that dispense medications for public health are not. You have probably received privacy practices acknowledgement forms from your local pharmacy for patients with active tuberculosis and high-risk latent TB infection. Getting a patient signature and returning the forms to a local pharmacy is an easy process. But what about the patients on treatment for latent TB infection receiving medication from the UW pharmacy? These forms may be returned to the UW Health West Pharmacy at your earliest convenience using one of several options.

- ◆ Batch the forms and mail in one envelope to:  
UW Health West - Pharmacy  
451 Junction Road, Suite 9901  
Madison, WI 53717-2656
- ◆ Fax the forms at your convenience to UW Health West - Pharmacy (608) 265-7456
- ◆ Batch the forms and mail to the TB Program with your refill requests. The TB Program will forward the forms to the UW Health West Pharmacy with our regular mailings.

### 3. Tips to Ease HIPAA Jitters

As health care facilities continue to wrestle with HIPAA rules, many are still reluctant to give local health department staff patient information over the telephone. When asked how to make staff in health care facilities more comfortable in complying with requests, a group of infection control practitioners offered these tips:

- Local health department staff should make sure they identify themselves when making telephone requests for patient information. Be sure to give your name, position, and the reason for your inquiry.
- Medical records staff in particular are reluctant to give information over the telephone. When possible, contact the infection control practitioner (ICP) in the facility. Use of a consistent point of contact will establish familiarity with local health department staff and make identification easier.
- If you are unable to reach the ICP and need to contact medical records staff, be prepared to fax a statement in advance. The form letter below may be used to notify covered entities of your request. It can then be used by the facility as documentation that information was disclosed.

Date:

From: (Name of Local Health Department)  
(Address, Telephone Number)

Re:

To Whom It May Concern:

(Name of local health department) is conducting the activities described here in its capacity as a public health authority as defined by the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), Standards for Privacy of Individually Identifiable Health Information; Final Rule (Privacy Rule) [45 CFR §164.501]. Pursuant to 45 CFR §164.512(b) of the Privacy Rule, covered entities such as your organization may disclose, without individual authorization, protected health information to public health authorities " . . . authorized by law to collect or receive such information for the purpose of preventing or controlling disease, injury, or disability, including, but not limited to, the reporting of disease, injury, vital events such as birth or death, and the conduct of public health surveillance, public health investigations, and public health interventions . . . "

(Name of local health department) is conducting all of the activities listed below, which are public health activities described by 45 CFR § 164.512(b), and is authorized by Chapter 252 of the Wisconsin Statutes. The information being requested represents the minimum necessary to carry out the public health purposes of this project pursuant to 45 CFR §164.514(d) of the Privacy Rule.

## **Public Health Activity**

- ? Disease prevention/control
- ? Investigation
- ? Surveillance
- ? Intervention
- ? Communicable disease reporting

Please keep this letter on file for future reference. If your organization's records policies require that a written notification be placed in a patient's medical file when information about that patient is reported to a public health authority, please use a copy of this notice for that purpose, when patient information is reported to the (Name of Local Health Department).

**If you have questions or concerns please contact:** (Name and Contact Information for Designated LHD Contact)

### **Telephone Reporting of Unusual Disease Occurrences**

*Occurrences of diseases that are uncommon or atypical in Wisconsin, and outbreaks or clusters of disease which are identified, should be reported by phone as soon as possible, to (608) 258-0099. Reports may be made to this number on a 24/7 basis, but please do not use it for normal and routine disease reporting*

#### **To be added to or removed from the distribution list contact:**

Cindy Paulson: [paulscl@dhfs.state.wi.us](mailto:paulscl@dhfs.state.wi.us) (608) 267-9003

#### **To comment on topics in this issue:**

Michael Pfrang: [pfranmm@dhfs.state.wi.us](mailto:pfranmm@dhfs.state.wi.us) (608) 266-7550